



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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N.P.S.-N.I.F.C.

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors and Superintendents

From: Acting Director 

Subject: Lifting of Prescribed Fire Moratorium

In August 2000, National Park Service Fire Management submitted a proposal outlining a strategic path for the phased reinstatement of the NPS prescribed fire program to the Secretary of the Interior. The proposal titled, "Increased Management Considerations in the Prescribed Fire Program: Three Phases of Reinstatement of the National Park Service Prescribed Fire Program," outlined in detail the process, action items and time lines to realign the prescribed fire program toward ensured success. On August 21, 2000, the Secretary of the Interior approved the proposal. The original time lines have been adjusted due to the activities associated with the 2000 fire season and the implementation of the National Fire Plan.

We are now ready to implement Phase III, which is the "Full Reinstatement of the Agency Prescribed Fire Program;" complete manual guidance and direction will be in place. Effective the date of this memorandum, authorization is given to parks to implement the prescribed fire guidelines in Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10, Fuels Management, west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian. Parks will have 30 days from the date of this transmittal to initiate any prescribed fire plan approved under an exemption before needing to revise the plan to meet the standards outlined in the guidance. The new Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10 is posted on the NPS Fire Net webpage @ [www.nps.gov/fire/fire/policy/rm18/](http://www.nps.gov/fire/fire/policy/rm18/), click on table of contents, and click on chapter 10. Also on the webpage are instructions for downloading and printing.

Parks east of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian must begin using this guidance for all prescribed fires that are implemented in FY 2002. This allows time to both implement projects this fiscal year for which the burn plan is already prepared and to revise burn plans for those projects for next fiscal year.

Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10 now incorporates a section on risk management. Before we initiate any prescribed fire, we must ask ourselves **what are the consequences of failure** if this burn does not go according to plan. We must understand the risks associated with the proposed prescribed fire. We cannot become complacent.

A National Prescribed Fire Workshop was held on February 26, 2001, in Reno, Nevada, to communicate the changes in prescribed burn policies, plans, required analyses and practices. Attendance at the workshop was required for all NPS Burn Bosses, Burn Boss Trainees, Prescribed Fire Managers, Prescribed Fire Manager Trainees, and FMOs. A second workshop was held in Orlando, Florida, on May 22, 2001. A third workshop will be scheduled in the fall of 2001 to accommodate the individuals who have not been able to attend the first two workshops.

We will evaluate the process used in Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10 this winter. We will also evaluate the recommendations from the National Academy of Public Administration, Phase 2 report and the interagency implementation guidelines for the 2001 Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. Then we will determine if there is a need to again update Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10.

I encourage all of you to review Reference Manual 18, Chapter 10. It is imperative that park superintendents and their fire management staff understand this guidance. Please address any questions you may have to your Regional Fire Management Officer, or Sue Vap, 208/387-5225 or Tom Zimmerman, 208/387-5215 in the Fire Management Program Center.